The Diamond Drill and Mary

64278

The Black Cat

Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Co.

Library of Congress
Two Copies Received
OCT 1900
Copyright Entry
Sept 14, 1900

November 1900

The Diamond Drill and Mary.
$150 Prize Story.
H. J. W. Dam.

In an Unknown World.
John Durworth.

Mose Johnson's Funeral.
Alexander Ricketts.

The Fate of the "Senegambian Queen."
Wardon Allan Curtis.

In the Temple at Singan.
David Bruce Fitzgerald.

5 CENTS

OCT 23 1900

No. 62. Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Co.

THE SHORTSTORY PUBLISHING CO 144 HIGH ST BOSTON. MASS.

1900
AWARDED
GRAND PRIX
PARIS
EXPOSITION
QUAKER
PURE
Quaker Oats received the highest award, because
QUAKER OATS
is noticeably superior. It is made of superior grain by a superior process. It is superior to all other cereal foods in digestibility and nutritive value, and is given to the public in a superior condition. It always receives the highest award for the same reason that it is the people's choice—it is superior.
PAUL E. DERRICK ADV'G AGCY. N.Y.

The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

No. 62. NOVEMBER, 1900. 5 cents a copy. 50 cents a year.

Entered at the Post-Office at Boston, Mass., as second-class matter.

THE BLACK CAT is devoted exclusively to original, unusual, fascinating stories — every number is complete in itself. It publishes no serials, translations, borrowings, or stealings. It pays nothing for the name or reputation of a writer, but the highest price on record for *Stories that are Stories*, and it pays not according to length, but according to strength. To receive attention, manuscripts must be sent unrolled, fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelope for return. All MSS. are received and returned at their writers' risk.

CAUTION. — *The entire contents of* THE BLACK CAT *are protected by copyright, and publishers everywhere are cautioned against reproducing any of the stories, either wholly or in part.*

The Diamond Drill and Mary.*

BY H. J. W. DAM.

IT was in the city of Virginia, in the State of Nevada.

The 1200-foot level of the Empire mine on the Comstock Lode had been run from the main shaft one hundred feet to the eastward. The level had been timbered up like a tunnel nearly the whole of the way. Beyond the timbering was an open space, an underground room in the solid rock, about ten feet long, six feet wide and eight high. The end of the level or face of the drift represented fifteen feet more of rock, yet unexcavated, which belonged to the Empire. Then came the boundary line and every inch of rock beyond belonged by law to the adjoining mine, the Northern Star.

This subterranean room was lighted by three candles in miners' iron candlesticks whose sharp-pointed ends were stuck into crevices in the wet, gray rock. Old Jack Nicholson, a bent, aged and white-bearded Cornishman, was connecting a feed pipe with a diamond drill set against the face of the drift. Another miner, a Scotchman named Provines, was oiling the drill bearings. The

* Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

* The writer of this story received a cash prize of $150 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending March 31, 1900.

third man was Grice, the superintendent of the mine. The task in hand was the exploration, by boring through it with the drill, of the fifteen feet of rock. If there was no silver ore there the rock was not worth excavating and would be abandoned. The work was a bit of ordinary routine and the men, as it proceeded, thought of nothing in particular.

But within a few feet of them, hidden by that wet gray wall, were millions upon millions of the wealth that makes men mad.

"Let her go, Jack," said Grice, and Nicholson turned the screw.

There was a clatter and whir as the compressed air set the drill in motion, which sound changed to a lower note as the ring of black diamonds set in steel began to cut its way into the virgin rock. The boring speed was about a foot per hour. The drill cut a hole in the shape of a ring, leaving untouched, as it went inward, a core or cylinder of rock about an inch in diameter, which broke off and came away whenever the drill was withdrawn. This core enabled the workers to know the kind of rock passed through, and whether it was silver-bearing or not.

"You'll be on till five in the morning, you two," said Grice.

"Yes, sir."

"Very good." He took his candle, walked away along the level to the shaft, entered the cage, which came lumbering up out of the darkness of the lower regions, and was taken to the surface. Here he changed his wet and muddy clothes for a jaunty suit of tweeds and a Panama straw hat. He walked with a springy step down the grade into Virginia City, and as he walked he thought of Mary.

Grice was something over thirty and a good-looking man in a manly sort of way. He was of middle height, but broad shouldered and heavily built, with a sharp, pleasant blue eye, a crisp, glistening yellow moustache and a strong, firm mouth. And Grice was in love, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, with Mary Conness.

Mrs. Conness, the mother, kept the Washington Boarding House, his home. She was a languid widow who had seen better days and wore very much too much brown hair and carelessly painted eyebrows. In contrast with her mother, Mary was a pearl

of purest ray serene. She had liquid brown eyes, such as her mother's had been, a firm, full bust, and was a type of health, animation and activity. She had a smile like a Madonna, and was twenty years old. The boarders, all men, simply worshipped her. Their bills, which were heavy, were paid without a murmur, and it was believed that they all kissed Mary's signature with rapture on the first of every month.

Grice's passion for Mary was six months old. All the dozen other boarders stood back in silence in the presence of Grice and Hart, her other suitor. John Hart was the superintendent of the Northern Star. He was a big, brawny, black-bearded Irishman from the North of Ireland. He was a rich man, a large owner in his mine, while Grice had only his five hundred dollars per month as superintendent. The mother, loving money, favored Hart. Mary secretly favored Grice. Hart was too hard, and his sneering, domineering quality was against him. Grice and Hart were friendly enough, but had little to say to each other. They were reserved in their manner with the reserve of two iron wills set on the same object, which they well knew would lead to a death struggle sooner or later. All of the other boarders knew perfectly well that neither man would ever marry Mary till the other was dead. This made life at the Washington piquantly interesting, and Ed Varney, the faro dealer, familiar through his business with calculations in the domain of the higher mathematics, said the odds were about even and he'd lay either way and had no choice.

This was the condition of affairs when about twelve o'clock that night a ragged and barefoot boy, panting and breathless, came tearing down from the Empire to the boarding house. He rang the bell repeatedly and finally awoke Mary, who answered the door.

"Please'm, Mr. Grice. I'm from the mine."

"What's happened?" shouted Grice, also awakened, over the banisters.

"I'm to see you alone, sir."

"Come up here."

Grice went back into his room and lighted a candle. He was in his nightshirt. The boy came in and shut the door.

"Grandad sent you this, sir," he said, holding out a grayish-black rod of rock about a foot long. "I was to take it to you as quick as God'd let me."

Grice took the rock and held it to the candle. As his eye fell on it he started as if he had received an electric shock. His face paled, his eyes opened wide and seemed to start from his head. "Great God!" he said, under his breath.

The rod was the richest ore known to the Comstock, gray-black, glistening, eighty per cent. solid silver.

He turned sharply to the boy. "Does Provines know it?"

"No," said the sharp-witted messenger. "Grandad told me to tell you he'd sent him up for a crank shaft which he'd never find."

And thus it was that the only persons who knew of it were Grice, Old Jack and the boy.

It was four in the morning. Grice had stood by the drill, fascinated, hour after hour. Finally, still in the same rich ore, it reached the Northern Star boundary. Old Jack stopped it and looked at him, questioning. It was a most vital question.

"Go on," said Grice. His mind was made up. He was going to explore Hart's mine, as Hart could not, the deepest level of the Northern Star being a hundred feet above them.

It was extremely wrong, of course, but a fortune and Mary were at stake. The laws of morality are largely matters of geography. If Grice had failed to take advantage of his opportunity he would have been suspected, in Virginia, not of high integrity but more probably of softening of the brain.

At six in the morning Grice stopped the drill. The two men were alone, as they wished to be, in the darkness of the earth. They both spoke with constraint, overstrung by the enormous wealth that seemed to be a living presence by their side.

"It's one of the big ones, Jack."

"Yes, sir."

"And nearly all in the Northern Star ground."

"Yes, sir."

"Jack, how much money do you want?"

"I'm nearly done myself, sir. But I've two daughters. I'd like to leave them and their babies well fixed."

"Well! Put a figure on it."

"Forty thousand dollars?"

"Say fifty. Is it a go?"

"Yes, sir."

"You'll not quit this drill till you're through the ore body?"

"No, sir."

"And not a soul shall know of it."

"No, sir."

"Shake." The bargain was made.

"I'm going to San Francisco. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Every time you add a ten-foot rod to the drill, you're to send me a telegram to the Pacific Club. Simply telegraph the distance in ore. When you get through it wire "Ended."

"Yes, sir."

"Then good-bye; your fifty thousand depends on you."

Grice went home, his brain in a dull fever. He packed his bag and was coming downstairs at seven o'clock to drive to the railway station when he saw Mary cross the hall and go into the sitting-room. He followed her in, still carrying his bag, and shut the door behind him.

"Mary," he said, and then he stopped. His voice failed him. She started, frightened. His face was pale, his features were strange, and his voice was husky, seemingly beyond his control.

"Are you ill? What's the matter?"

"Don't bother about me," he said more quietly. "Mary, I want to ask you a question. May I?"

The tears sprang to her eyes. She knew all about the question — as women do.

"Yes," she said, faintly.

The question came slowly, every word an effort. All his hope in life depended on the answer. "Do you love me, Mary?"

Poor Mary tried to say something, but her voice was not working just then. She proceeded to burst out crying. He ought to have put his arms around her, but he did not know that. It was awkward. She only cried nervously.

"I — I've got to catch the train; I must, Mary. Am I — am I wrong?" he asked in sinking fear.

"No! Oh, NO!" said Mary. It was easier to say "No" than "Yes."

Grice dropped his bag and folded her in his arms. He held her to him hungrily. "God bless you. God bless you," was all he could say. "We'll be married, Mary, married the minute I get back." He looked at her, his eyes full of yearning.

There came on her face a smile that was almost heavenly. It was like the strong sunlight glowing in a church window. His eyes and heart drank in the smile. They were satisfied. He released her and hurried away to the train.

And Mary, with everything in the world to occupy her on that busy morning, sat down, and laughed and cried by turns. The man's passion had infected her like a fever. But she was strangely happy. She seemed to float on air. She forgot everything in the world but Grice and herself, and half an hour afterwards was standing, gazing absorbed into the mirror, wondering how a girl like her could make a man love her like that.

"*Well!*" said her mother in indignation and astonishment, standing in the doorway in a horribly new green and yellow dressing gown.

Whereupon Mary came down from the clouds and instantly went to market, just as if that morning were just like every other morning of all the days of her life.

. . . . . .

At ten o'clock that evening Grice arrived at San Francisco, took a carriage on the ferry-wharf and was driven to a mansion in the western addition of the city. He rang the bell, and was shown into the study of Mr. Joshua Harbin, who was waiting for him, advised by telegram. Mr. Joshua Harbin was a very tall and very thin man about sixty-eight years old, dressed in black broadcloth. His hair was a sandy color, cut short, and was turning to a greenish gray. He had a pale eye, something between light blue and hazel, and a soft, slow voice.

"I've got a very big thing, Harbin," said Grice, sharply. "I want your capital to handle it."

"Y-e-es," said Mr. Harbin, sleepily.

Mr. Harbin had a slow and sleepy manner. Perhaps hawks have such a manner when they sail over a rabbit warren.

Grice told his story. He took from his bag, and showed to Harbin, fifteen feet of broken core from the drill. Mr. Harbin was unmoved. He handled the ore tenderly, almost politely. Two red spots, however, made themselves apparent in his cheeks, and his old heart beat so fast that he took a drink, sipping it very quietly, to help the organ along.

"Now, shall we get to business?" said Mr. Harbin, tenderly.

They discussed brokers, combinations and many other things connected with the Stock Exchange, for hours. Northern Star stock was selling at a dollar. Upon the announcement of the discovery it would be worth many hundreds. Their plan was to buy all of it that could be obtained, and keep on buying as long as it showed a profit.

During the next and the following days Grice and Harbin slept little. Harbin had a million ready to use in their operations, and day and night his brain was working coldly, steadily, but rapidly, as it loved to. Grice's eyes were watching every throb of the market, and a dozen different men, unknown to each other, were giving orders for him, buying and selling, to a dozen different brokers. He nursed the market like the most skilful lady in white cap and apron that ever received a nurse's certificate. The stock was coming in in thousands of shares, and not a cent was being wasted. And every now and then the spots in the old man's cheeks burned deeper and redder with excitement as he read Old Jack's string of telegrams, each one showing the great ore body to be bigger and bigger and the vista of millions wider and wider.

The telegrams were simply:

"Twenty!"

"Thirty!"

"Forty!"

"Fifty!"

Fifty feet of almost solid silver in the greatest pocket the Comstock had ever seen.

"When he gets through the ore body we must be ready to let the news leak out," Harbin said gently to his partner.

But it leaked without their aid. Old Jack had sent off "Sixty," "Seventy" and "Eighty," and when he next drew out the core he had come to the end. It was country rock. But he

sent no telegram of "Ended." He tried to, but the old man had not the strength. The San Francisco papers had the full story next morning, under startling black head-lines, taking columns and whole pages of the sensational issues with such "scare" headings as: —

> **DEAD AT HIS POST.**
> **Tremendous Discovery on the Comstock Lode.**
> **Bonanza in the Northern Star.**
> **Millions Upon Millions.**
> **An Empire Drill Cuts Eighty-three Feet of Solid Ore on the 1200.**

The bombshell had burst, but Old Jack's ears had not heard it. He had died under the strain upon heart and nerves. But the children were provided for, and the old grandfather slept sweetly and peacefully, lying there in the darkness of the 1200, with a rod in his hand and his back against the drill.

Of how the market went mad and the stock jumped upward it is not necessary to tell. It was only repeating history. The stock had closed at 27 the night before. It opened at 60, jumped to 100, and was bought and sold wildly all day long up to 180. Two days later it was at 300. The next day it was over 400 and steadied itself for a time at that figure, and then went upward.

Harbin, a miracle of vigilance, coolness and energy, sold enough Northern Star shares to make about two and a half million dollars of cash profits. And he and Grice still held shares which at ruling values represented more than double that amount.

Sitting alone in Harbin's private office, Grice went over the balance sheet carefully. Then he settled back and looked at a new world in a new light.

Like magic his dreams had been realized. He was a millionaire. And the millions were lighted with a softer, more glowing radiance by the smile of a girl in a boarding house, the smile that had been given him as these days of wonderful changes had begun.

. . . . . .

The history of Hart during this period was the change from sneering, triumphant sanity to anger amounting to madness, blazing, wild and uncontrollable.

The revelation of Old Jack's death and the tremendousness of the discovery came upon him like a thunderbolt. The rush of

blood to his head nearly choked him and the rush back to the heart made him dizzy. He tore out of his office without a word and strode madly in a straight line up the mountain, striving to find an outlet in action for the impulses which ravaged him like wild animals.

He had been tricked, beaten, made into a laughing-stock by the man he already hated fiercely. He had lost millions which should and would have been his, and he had lost the girl. That he would fail to kill Grice was the only thought that could now stab him, but he had no doubt of this, and he would have been ready to kill any other man who suggested it.

He dared not leave Virginia, for fear of missing Grice on his return. Forced to do something, he began to drink, and this kept him within bounds. He drank wildly and madly. All the town were waiting for Grice and the duel, and thus three days passed.

Poor Mary, who knew all, and saw all that was coming, had lain awake the whole night trembling and in tears. She had telegraphed Grice his danger, but how to save him — how to save him — how to save him, was the terrible question printed in letters of light upon the darkness into which she stared.

It was five o'clock in the morning. She heard Hart, with two other men almost as intoxicated as himself, surge heavily along the hallway and enter his room. She stole out of bed, slipped on a wrapper, tiptoed to Hart's door and listened.

"I'll kill him," snarled Hart, in drunken fury. "I'll kill him, I tell you. I'll kill the ——— as soon as he sets foot in Virginia."

She staggered back to her room almost fainting with fright. The two men went away. She waited till half past six o'clock, and then rose and dressed.

She went over to the gunsmith's shop opposite. She knew the clerk, and found him taking down the shutters.

"Have you any blank revolver cartridges?"

"What size?"

"Colt — Colt 44, I think."

"Plenty." They were used to show ignorant purchasers how to load their revolvers without a superfluous tragedy.

Mary went back with five blank ball cartridges. She stopped at Hart's door and listened. He was snoring in a heavy, sodden,

drunken sleep. She went softly in. His revolver lay on the bureau. Trembling, with bated breath, she took out the five cartridges and slipped the blanks into their places. As she laid the pistol down they looked exactly like the others.

She closed the door gently, flew back to her room, and falling on her knees by the bedside breathed a prayer of agonized thanks. Like a brave and loving girl, doing her best in a strictly masculine matter, she had muddled things very considerably. Her lover, when attacked, would now in all probability shoot and kill an unarmed man, and be in a very unpleasant position indeed.

It was Tuesday evening. The big octagon clock at the back of the bar in Ormerod's saloon made it a quarter past nine.

This saloon, the best known and highest class establishment of its kind in Virginia, was a large, high room with a mahogany bar running the entire length of the right-hand side. A row of barrels ran along the left-hand side, with a passage back of them to a door. There was no other, except the large centre one.

The place was packed with men and filled with cigar smoke, the smell of rye whiskey and the hum of excited conversation. The strike in Northern Star was one of those events which at irregular periods completely turned the head of the city, and added to it was the feud between Grice and Hart. Both men were personally known to everybody, and Grice was popular. All the talk turned upon the meeting, with conjectures as to where it would take place and the outcome. That one or both were sure to "go under" nobody doubted. The sympathies were with Grice. The ethical question as to the propriety of his action did not occur to anybody. He was regarded as being in big luck and as having cleverly utilized his opportunity.

The place blazed with gaslight, and three bar-keepers in white jackets, their oiled hair plastered down upon their foreheads in arabesques of consummate beauty, were busy pushing bottles, glasses and cigar boxes along the sloppy bar. This was fronted by a line of men three deep, and the drinking was incessant. At the lower end of the bar farthest from the door was Hart, his face pale, his eyes bloodshot, and his expression set, wild and bloodthirsty. He was drinking with a couple of friends and planning the events of the morrow.

Without the slightest warning a firm, rasping voice rang out cheerily, "Good evening, gentlemen." Grice, in a black felt hat and brown overcoat, stood in the doorway.

The effect can scarcely be described. The place was so crowded that movement was difficult, and every man knew that in a moment bullets would be flying wildly. There was only one door, Grice and, of course, his pistol filling the other. Half a dozen men vaulted over the bar, sweeping bottles and glasses with them, and landing on top of the bar-keepers, who had thrown themselves flat at the word. The rest of the men, in a wild scrambling scrimmage, rushed together like stampeded cattle to get out of the line of fire. Half threw themselves to the floor and the other half fell over them or ran over them, or fell sprawling in an inextricable mass. All this took place in a second and pandemonium reigned.

At the sound of Grice's voice Hart whipped out his pistol. The instant the disappearing crowd opened a lane between them he began to shoot.

Grice was taken completely by surprise. He fully expected a desperate encounter with Hart, but had no fear whatever of assassination. According to the iron law of custom and the requirements of a coroner's jury, Hart was bound to warn him; to telegraph or write or verbally say, "Heel yourself," prior to attack. His overcoat was buttoned closely around him. He tried to draw his pistol, but before he could get it from his hip pocket, click-click-click-click-click went Hart's pistol, and five shots, any one of which would have been his death, had failed to explode.

With a furious oath Hart hurled his useless pistol at Grice and sprang forward with a knife. But Grice's pistol now covered him and Grice's finger was on the trigger. Hart stopped, motionless, his knife raised in the air.

The crowd held its breath. The position of affairs was new. By all the recognized rights Hart's life belonged to Grice, but still it did not seem possible that Grice could take it.

Grice with his pistol levelled stood thinking. At a nod from him Hart dropped his knife to the floor.

"I'll give you a chance," said Grice, quietly. "Go out there."

Hart marched out through the doorway into the moonlit street.

Grice glanced at Ed Varney with a significant nod. The crowd understood and grinned. They knew that Hart, a would-be murderer, was to be run out of town and that they were invited to assist at the function. They followed, chuckling and drawing their revolvers.

"Take thirty paces and then run for your life," said Grice.

Hart, now trembling, livid, clinging to life as the vital instinct clings, marched thirty paces down the middle of the street, Grice counting them aloud. Then Grice's pistol cracked, but a second before Hart bent low and ran like a deer. Then other pistols cracked rapidly in a scattering roar, but no bullet touched him. They were not meant to. In a frenzy of fear and hope, Hart ran like an arrow into the night, out of range and out of Virginia for ever. He was never seen in Nevada again.

Grice started for home. At the first corner a girl, hatless and cloakless, waiting in the shadow, gave a low cry and fell fainting into his arms.

He clasped her to him in silence, looked up at the blue-black sky, and humbly, for the first time in his life, thanked Heaven for its blessing and its mercy.

They walked onward, Mary still weak and trembling and Grice supporting her. A little later, in the sitting-room, he told Mary of his providential escape. Then Mary told him something.

He started up as if he had been stung. He was pale with the thought of what might have been.

"But — but — what should I have done?" asked Mary, ready to cry. He looked as if she had done him an injury.

"You — you've saved my life, dear," said Grice, solemnly. "But don't — don't you ever do it again. It — er — it complicates matters."

Which shows once more that no lord of creation will ever appreciate what a woman does for him.

In An Unknown World.*

BY JOHN DURWORTH.

IT is worth something to have passed through an experience absolutely unique in the history of mankind — to have known sensations vouchsafed to no human being in the past, and which will probably remain forever sealed from the race in the future. Such has been my peculiar lot, and as nearly as words will permit I shall give a plain story of the facts, and thus add my mite to the great composite store of human knowledge.

On a spring day, about a year ago, as a student in Vienna, I was walking along a narrow street in the neighborhood of the University buildings. The month was April and the air was bright and fragrant with the fulfilled promises of an early spring. Far beyond the skyline of the buildings fleecy clouds were drifting slowly by, while down below and about my path the streets were full of life and newly awakened activity. The whole city, inanimate as well as animate, seemed to be breathing and drinking full and deep of the air and the sunshine, while over all rose the vast and mighty bee-hive murmur which told of work and of the need of daily bread.

The sensations from ear and eye which told me of these surroundings now rest in my memory as the last of the old life and of the external world in which I had lived to that time.

I had come in the course of my walk to a huge new building in the process of erection, and was passing under the exterior scaffolding. Then a horrible shock and a blank.

. . . . . .

When next I seemed to awake to consciousness, it was to the quiet and blackness of death — a death, however, in which I could still feel, as the dull pain in my forehead assured me. Then, as

* Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

the impulse to movement came, I put forth my hands and found that I was in bed with seemingly unfamiliar surroundings. I called or tried to, but my voice seemed frozen in the throat, and no sound met the ear in response to the effort. Some one came, however — I felt the jar — and took my hand, felt the pulse and passed a hand over my forehead. Again I spoke, and asked where I was and what had occurred, or at least made the effort, but no voice reached the ear, neither my own nor that of my visitor, in reply. Almost uncertain whether alive or dead, whether in this world or another, I bethought myself of writing, and so made the motion of forming letters with the forefinger on the palm of the hand. My visitor understood and brought what I could plainly feel to be a pencil and pad of paper. Guided simply by the sense of movement I immediately wrote my questions of where? what? how? why? The pad was taken and my questions, I suppose, were read; still there was no reply other than a kindly and soothing pressure of the hand on my head, and an attempt to close my eyes as if to suggest sleep. But I was not to be put off and so wrote on my pad the following: "For *yes* press on the back of my hand once, for *no* press twice." Then I wrote below: "Do you know the telegraph code?" I felt pressure twice. Then again: "Can you bring me some one who does?"

I felt the pressure once. Then, after a time, there came a jar as of footsteps, and again my hand was taken, while on the back I felt the rippling flow of pressure from a finger forming letters as plainly as though by the familiar click of the telegraph code. It spelled out:

"Do you understand?"

My thought had indeed been divined. I had learned something of telegraphy as an amateur, and the thought of gaining communication with the outside world in this way through the sense of feeling had occurred to me when all other means had failed. Eagerly I replied, and again asked my questions as before. In reply my hand was taken and then the story was tapped off to me as it had happened nearly a month before. I shall not trouble the reader with details. There had been an accident, the scaffolding under which I was at the moment passing had given way, and I had been struck on the head by a falling beam of iron, and taken

unconscious to the hospital. There my life had been despaired of, but in the end a great specialist in brain surgery had been called and had performed an operation which had saved life, but, for the present at least, had left me totally blind and deaf. I shall not try to describe my feelings or the workings of my mind at this information. For those who have lost a sense, such description is quite unnecessary, and for those who have not, no words yet coined would be adequate for the purpose.

Days passed on, though to me light and darkness, day and night were one; but at intervals which I suppose to have been days my operator came and talked with me and enabled me to talk with the surgeons and nurses, and thus to gain contact with the outside world. It appeared, furthermore, that my organs of speech were uninjured, and so, while unable to hear my own voice, I could nevertheless express my thought in ordinary speech, being guided chiefly by a sense of the effort necessary in forming the words. This saved the telegraphy on my part, and made communication so much the simpler and more satisfactory.

On one of these occasions, not long after my return to consciousness, and while I was conversing through my interpreter with the house surgeon, a hope was tapped off to me that possibly I should not be always as I now was; that the great specialist had introduced certain unique features in the course of the operation which he had performed, and that he had expressed the hope that I might some time hear and see. This was the hope held out to me, vaguely and uncertainly expressed, yet it was a straw to a drowning man, and I clutched and held to it as such.

And now I must speak of Thérése, my betrothed. Of an old Franco-Austrian family, I had met her at the house of a friend scarcely a year ago, and but lately we had made our mutual promises of trust and troth. My last memory of her ran back to the morning of the day on which I had been injured, when I had met her on the street, instinct with youth, life and beauty, and we had parted with plans for a walk together in the late afternoon. Thérése was fair to the eye and her voice a delight to the ear, and now this wall of physical separation had come between us. Was I never again to hear her voice or see her face? In my first enquiries little time had been lost in asking for Thérése, if she knew

and could visit me. Yes, I was told, she knew and had already seen me several times before the return of consciousness, and had now been denied only by the orders of the attending surgeon, who feared nervous excitement at the present time. But soon, perhaps to-morrow, she should be allowed to come, and so I awaited the morrow. Then, when a warm, gentle hand was placed over mine and I felt soft lips on my forehead, I knew that Thérése was there, and for the moment I was content. Then my interpreter came in and we could converse, and I was happy indeed. So one day followed another, but not for long were we content to be dependent on an interpreter, one foreign to our own thoughts and feelings. With the zeal born of love Thérése had soon mastered the code, and could tap and ripple off messages on my hand, cheek or forehead, and so became my interpreter, nurse and constant comfort.

But what of this hope of the great doctor that some day I might hear and see? It was a hope long deferred, and I should have become heartsick indeed but for Thérése and the comfort of her presence. Finally, one afternoon about three weeks after my awakening, she was sitting holding my hand, and the western sun, which, as she had told me, was streaming in through the open windows, fell with slanting rays on the pillows near my head. I asked her to turn my face to the window that I might look out. My eyes, it will be understood, were in no way injured, and externally seemed entirely normal. The lack of sight was in the brain, and not in the eye. So she turned my face to the window and I lay wondering how long before some glimmer of light might work its way through to the deadened brain. As I lay thus I began to be conscious of a humming sound, something like a hive of bees; like and still different from any sound I had ever heard. This was the first sensation of hearing of which I had been conscious since my awakening into a world of darkness and silence. Astonished, I quickly turned to tell Thérése and ask her the meaning of so startling a sensation. As I turned, the humming ceased. Like the passing murmur of a ripple on the beach, it had come and gone, a whisper from the outer world — and then silence. Again I turned my eyes to the window, and again came the mysterious whisper. I closed my eyelids and it ceased — I opened them and it began. With mind bewildered I tried again and again and found that in

some mysterious way the cause of the whisper was the light of the western sun entering my eyes. With expectation tense and tinged almost with foreboding, Thérése and I talked of the new wonder, and as we talked the sun sank behind the neighboring building and the ghostly whispers ceased.

As the days went by these murmuring whispers became stronger and louder, with differences which I came to associate with changes of light and shade in my surroundings. Still, it was all vague, mysterious and almost oppressive, and I knew not what to think. I had talked with the house surgeon regarding the matter, but he had little to say and only bade me be of good cheer and hope for the best.

Then quickly came another mystery. About a week after my first visit from the sunlight, Thérése and I were talking regarding indifferent matters, when suddenly I felt a heavy jar, and too clearly for mistake saw a sudden flash of color. It was located nowhere in particular, simply a flash, and it was gone. Eagerly I told Thérése and asked her regarding the jar. She replied that at the moment an attendant in passing along the hall had slipped, and a heavy tray of dishes which he was carrying had fallen to the floor with a tremendous crash.

This was the beginning of another series of mysterious experiences, and by means which need not be detailed it became clear that in some incomprehensible way loud noises were capable of producing flashes of color sensation. Then, as the days went by, the flashes of light and color began to be more plainly and constantly seen, while on the other hand the ghostly whisperings became likewise clearer and with more of character and individuality. The former were plainly caused by the sounds of footsteps, the rumble of the street, and finally by the human voice; while the latter were as clearly dependent on the light and color which came to my eyes from the world about me. I was, indeed, in a world of wonder and mystery, and but for Thérése I should have been quite ready to believe that, after all, I had been killed, and was simply waking into a new state of existence. But there is no reason why a more complete explanation should not be given at this point, though it was only after long months that I came into a full knowledge of the facts as detailed below.

The eminent surgeon who had operated upon me was a man who for years had lived with but a single aim in life — the demonstration of certain theories regarding the functions of the brain. He came of a family of physicians and surgeons, and for thirty years had pursued his studies with unvarying and unwearying purpose. He had even come to be considered as almost a monomaniac on the subject of his own pet theories, and it was known that he spent most of his time in making the boldest and most original experiments in these fields of investigation. Those who knew best had even come to shake their heads and to hint that in some of his hospital operations his boldness had overstepped the limits of discretion and caution, and that some of his experiments would hardly bear the light of an official examination. Nevertheless, his skill was admittedly unequalled, and in desperate cases, where his exquisite touch, profound knowledge of the human brain and imperturbable nerve seemed the only recourse offering a ray of hope, he was often called in as the last resort. So in my own case, considered desperate from the first, he was called in as the only one whose skill and special knowledge might offer some little chance for the saving of life and of reason together.

Now, it appears that he had long awaited the opportunity to try an experiment which he believed would throw much light on certain obscure points concerning the operations within the brain. This related to the effect of an interchange between the parts of the brain connected with the optic and with the auditory nerves. That is, he wished to connect the optic nerve, leading from the eye, with that part of the brain which receives its usual stimulus from the auditory nerve, coming from the ear; and, *vice versa*, the auditory nerve, leading from the ear, with that part of the brain which receives its usual stimulus from the optic nerve, coming from the eye. If certain views which he held were correct, he believed that with such a change of relation and with a nerve connection thus set up between the eye and the hearing part of the brain, and between the ear and the seeing part, light in the outward eye would produce the sensation of sound in the brain, and sound in the outer ear the sensation of light in the brain. When I was placed in his hands at the hospital he found both optic and

auditory nerves involved in the brain lesions, though the corresponding brain centres seemed uninjured. Here, then, was the opportunity which he had sought so long. The temptation was sudden and too great to be withstood. I knew long after what he must have suffered mentally while wavering and before he finally yielded and decided to make me thus a victim of his hypothesis. In the readjustment of the parts, then, the change had been made. No one had been the wiser, and hardly expecting that I would recover, he awaited the result.

Poor man! I can bear him no ill-will, for terribly he suffered — far more than I. The charges of idiosyncrasy and monomania were but too well founded, and the dormant brain lesions which his solitary and single-viewed life had helped to develop now rapidly made themselves manifest, and soon after the operation on my head, which was indeed the last of importance which he performed, it was found necessary to place him in the charge of keepers and in an institution where he could be watched and properly cared for. The nervous strain attendant on the operation and the temptation against which he had vainly struggled had doubtless hastened the climax, and he had thus lost the use of his own brain and reason while giving to me life and reason indeed, though with brain faculties so sadly twisted.

. . . . . .

So, to return to the thread of my story, it will be understood, as the days went by and the nerves and brain centres became accustomed to their new relations, that I began to have clear and distinct *sound sensations* caused by the rays of light entering my eyes and thus interpreting to me in terms of sound what for others was a world of light and color. In like manner, I came also to have equally clear and distinct *light* and *color* sensations, caused by sound waves entering the ear, and thus interpreting to me in these terms what to others was a world of sound. I remember especially when words began to take on tints and shades of their own. I first noticed them with my own voice, and then later I remember the joy when I could see the words spoken by Thérése and thus recognize her voice. Very soon after, I was able to begin to associate the appearance of the word with its meaning, and thus to acquire a vocabulary of visible speech. This

I could do by speaking the word myself and having Thérése or others do the same, and then noting in each case the essential features of the visible image or appearance. It will be understood that these word visions possessed no form, in the ordinary meaning of the term. They arose from a disturbance in the brain coming from the ear, and not from a picture on the retina of the eye. Nevertheless, they possessed abundance of character to make sure a recognition of their identity and individuality. Color, both in tint and intensity, together with the sequence of change and the duration of the component parts all modified by subtle effects of light and shade, these came soon to speak for me a language no less certain than that which I had known of old by the ear. So likewise with other sounds — the hum of the street, the ticking of the clock, the distant chiming bell — each had its own color value with qualities of light and shade, and so I came to interpret the outside world of sound almost, or in a way, quite as well as formerly by the ear.

So, likewise, with the outside world of light and color. It now spoke to me a new and wonderful language, first of whispers and faint murmuring echoes, and then of sounds, varying in every conceivable manner in pitch, quality and power. While noise, harshness and discord were by no means unknown, this world was for the most part one of music. The full rolling of the organ tone, the tinkling of a distant bell, the song of joy in the throat of a nightingale, the lullaby of a mother to her babe, these are dim suggestions of the world of music in which I lived, and of the message which my outward environment now brought me through the eye. I came also to realize that the external forms of objects were thus determined by their tones or notes. The square of the window with the blue sky beyond, for example, was mapped out by a delicious high-pitched and clear, bell-like tone, while the fleecy clouds as they drifted by would sing me a lullaby like my mother of old. Then, on either side, the darker walls of the room spoke to me in gentle murmurs and subdued tones according to the play of color, light and shade.

. . . . . .

And now the reader will perhaps begin to realize why I find it difficult to describe in ordinary language the sensations through

which the outer world was revealed to me. But let me at least make the attempt, imperfect as it may be. Let me give a glimpse of an hour of my life after the return of physical strength and the full development of my new senses of sight and hearing. The time is about a year later, and Thérése and I are wed. We are at a hotel in Constance and she has gone out for the moment, leaving me at the western window looking out on the sunset sky. And so as I watch, allowing my eyes to wander over the blazing heavens, I hear mighty harmonies, as of some heavenly symphony. Grand and mysterious the sounds wax and wane with the play of light and change of tint. Now I hear a cloud drifting southward over the sun. The music becomes soft, and I hear gentle melodies as of bells on some far off mountain peak. Then the cloud drifts past and as I am looking near the sun I hear a burst of music, fierce and wild. Startled I turn away, until the eye rests on the cool mountain side with the shepherds and their returning flocks. I have learned to know and love this view, for it sings to me a pastoral, and I look and listen with enchantment to the soft, glad strains of music borne to me on the wings of the light. Then, as the sun declines, I hear the sweet cadences of the shadows as they lengthen and fall over the mountain side and plain.

While I have been gazing thus at the music of the western sky and the distant landscape, the sounds of the street, as they rise to my window on the air, have been painting also for me pictures of light and color. But now I catch a succession of tints which tells me that footsteps are coming, and soon Thérése enters the room. I turn as she approaches, and where are now the harmonies and melodies of the sunset? Forgotten, and I am listening to the sweetest music ear ever heard as she approaches me with the sunset light falling upon her face. I hear the warm blush of life and love on her cheek; it is a tone which no ears but mine have heard. I hear the love-light in her eyes; it speaks a language which I only can interpret. I hear her golden hair as the sunlight falls upon it, and it whispers to me a lullaby, gentle and sweet.

Then we sit down together and watch the western sky. For me it is the sunset overture, drawing gently to its close; and, finally, as the sun sinks behind the mountain ridge, the earth seems

to sob as with grief, and the fading tints take up the harmony in a minor key and so carry it to its finish in a far away whisper, faint and sweet.

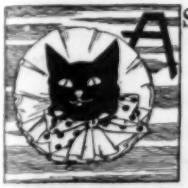
Then we turn, and she tells me of the incidents of her walk. I see the soft, deep tints of her voice and the rich play of color, as her words fade and blend one into another.

Then she sits down at the piano and paints for me a picture, and I see the ebb and flow of the music in a glittering play of color, coruscating and shining with tints and shades, which remind me of the soap-bubble and the rainbow of my former world.

But the mood passes, and we go to the window and look out at the darkening sky. Here and there, as I turn my eyes, I hear a star as a far-off tinkling bell, while the faint earth-light comes up to me as a subdued and dying whisper. Thérése asks me a question and I see her words as a play of soft prismatic color, while as she turns for my reply, I catch the expression of her face — to me a sweet melody, breathing of love and constancy, and so I am content.

Mose Johnson's Funeral.*

BY ALEXANDER RICKETTS.



AS I sat on the porch talking desultorily with the landlord — the wide, roomy porch, with the wobbly, creaky, comfortable, splint-bottomed rocking-chairs, of the old tavern, not the "piazza" of the garish new hotel, which the younger generation point to pridefully as stamping with an outward and visible sign the village's evolution into a city — I happened to mention, I've forgotten exactly how it came into my mind, having seen General Grant's funeral.

"Humph!" observed the landlord, contemptuously. "You oughter've seen Mose Johnson's funeral if you wanter say you've seen a funeral. Eh, fellers?"

An appreciative chuckle circulated among the rest of the loungers, and spurred me into asking, "Why?"

"'Cause it was worth seein'," explained the landlord, scraping vigorously away with his jack-knife at the turnip with which he was refreshing himself.

"Whenever any of you out-of-town fellers comes 'round here braggin' about your gorgeous mortuary pageants, like them General Grant's obsequies you jest mentioned," he added, after thoughtfully selecting a new point of attack upon the turnip, "it don't fease us any. We jest nudge each other in an unassumin' way, an' say 'He oughter 've seen Mose Johnson's funeral.' It was plenty of panoramer for simple country folks like us."

"What was it? How was it remarkable?" I asked, curiously.

"Oh, I dunno as it was anyways remarkable, except out here in the country. Mebbe you fellers that live in big cities are used to them," replied the landlord, cautiously.

"Well, let me hear about it, and I can tell better," I urged.

"Then, to begin at the beginnin'," began the landlord, clearing,

* Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

reluctantly apparently, for action by depositing the turnip, with his knife stuck upright in it, on the porch railing, "it was all on account of an ord'nance we've got here providin' that there sha'n't be any parades unless the Mayor gives a permit for it. Last year when the circus struck town we had a cross-grained, crabbed old feller for Mayor, an' when the circus man went to get a permit for his parade he got turned down.

"'I want a permit to parade,' says the circus man.

"'You can't have it,' says the Mayor.

"'I'd like to know why I can't,' says the circus man.

"''Cause circuses are demoralizin' an' indecent inventions of the devil for to lead the young an' unwary onter destruction, an' consequently I don't approve of them,' says the Mayor.

"'Nothin' of the kind,' says the circus man. 'I'll have you know that mine is a great moral and instructin' show, that'll benefit an' uplift any community, an' especial any old moth-eaten fossil like you.'

"So the two of them had it back an' forth, hot an' heavy. The circus man beggin', an' the Mayor refusin'; the circus man threatenin', an' the Mayor defyin' him; the circus man pleadin', an' the Mayor sittin' obstinate; the circus man gettin' madder an' madder, an' the Mayor not budgin' an inch; the circus man cussin', an' the Mayor finin' him seventy-five cents per cuss — until the upshot of it all was that the circus man had to leave without the permit, but swearin' he'd parade in spite of all the mayors an' permits in creation, while the Mayor was vowin' he shouldn't, if he had to call out the militia to stop him.

"Well, mister circus man came down here an' carried on somethin' awful, worse than the wildest wild man from Borneo you ever seen, an' offerin' everythin' to everybody if they'd only tell him how he could outwit the Mayor, an jest then I had sorter an idear. So I says to him, 'Say,' I says, 'Mose Johnson's lyin' dead this minit, waitin' for the poor board to bury him, Mose always bein' a shiftless, thoughtless, no-'count kind of a feller.'

"'I wish it was the Mayor,' snaps Mr. Circus. 'What of it?'

"'Well,' I says, 'I dunno as there's any ord'nance regulatin' funerals, or permits got to be got for the same. Do I get that contract for feedin' the animals?' I says.

"'You do,' says the circus man, his face lighting up like a transparency. 'Set 'em up for the house, an' then come and show me where Johnson's abode is.'

"At first the disconsolate widder stood out for a full suit of mournin' — dress, shoes, stockin's, bonnet, veil, an' all the fixin's — but finally she compromised on a crape veil an' a pass to the show an' a seat on the band-wagon.

"Accordin', right on the time advertised, along down the street past the Mayor's office came a hearse, with Johnson reposin' peacefully in it, an' the circus follerin' in all its glory, with the red an' gold glitterin', an' the elephants trumpetin', an' the lions roarin', an' the hyenas laughin', an' the rest of the menagerie howlin' an' gruntin' an' growlin' an' carryin' on, each in his particular style, an' the band playin' sometimes a funeral march to jig time an' sometimes 'A Hot Time in the Old Town' to funeral march time, an' the horses prancin', an' the ladies smirkin', an' the chariots rumblin', an' the clowns grinnin', an' the men smilin', an' the steam pianner tootlin' hymn tunes with variations, an' the circus man a-straddlin' a dancin' piebald stallion, lookin' proud an' serene an happy.

"My socks, wasn't it the Mayor's turn to be mad! He came rushin' out of his office like a crazy man on the loose, an' catchin' hold of the bridles of the horses pullin' the hearse, shoved them right spang back on their haunches.

"'What's the meanin' of this here?' shouted the circus man, ridin' up, pretendin' to be terribly shocked. 'What do you mean by interferin' in this outrageous way with my old friend Mr. Johnson's funeral, you old grave-robber you?'

"'Wha-at?'" gasps the Mayor.

"'I'll have you know that we're performin' our sad duty of attendin' our late lamented friend's remains to their last restin' place, you irreverent old body snatcher. Ain't we, Mrs. Johnson', says the circus man, pleasant as a basket of chips.

"'Yes, you be,' chirps the forlorn widder, from where she was munchin' peanuts an' popcorn beside the bass-drum in the band-wagon.

"Well, sir, the Mayor was pig-headed about some things, but he realized instanter that he didn't have no authority to stop a fun-

eral in full career. So all he could do was grind his teeth, an' froth considerable at the mouth, an' hope somethin'd turn up that'd give him a chance at that circus man while that parade follered Johnson all over town. An' they didn't shirk Johnson none either, but finally went ahead an' planted him to the tune of 'Where Was Moses When the Light Went Out?' There was the biggest crowd at that funeral that ever attended such a melancholy event in this town.

"An' that's why," concluded the landlord, resuming his knife and turnip, "we're claimin' that the last sad rites paid to Mose Johnson's ashes were somethin' new an' unique in the way of obsequies, at least in this here neighborhood."

The Fate of The "Senegambian Queen."*

BY WARDON ALLAN CURTIS.

IT WAS off the east coast of Madagascar, seat of pirate lairs, where no honest vessel ever ventured voluntarily, yet the clumsy little Dutch brig, laboring slowly southward before a fair north wind, with the mangrove swamps of the shore not three miles off its starboard quarter, could hardly be a vessel which storms had driven into that neighborhood, for fair weather had prevailed for several weeks. Storm driven she was not, honest she could not but be, for no pirate would sail in such a wagon of the deep, and so the pirate lookout in the tall tree at the entrance of the cove where lay ambushed the *Senegambian Queen*, Captain William Avery, conjectured that it was in search of water that the stranger had approached the pirate-haunted coast. So little had the crew of the *Senegambian Queen* expected any quarry to come their way while they were on the island, and so little did they fear the advent of warships, that it was a full three hours after the brig was sighted before they were collected from the retreats to which they had scattered. Slowly the *Senegambian Queen* poked her black nose out from behind the forest-covered point of the cove, like some lank beast of prey reconnoitering the fat little vessel in the offing. Then, catching the wind, she began to skim the water. Such a poor prize the brig looked to be. The men cursed Captain Avery for calling them from their naps and sports to the pursuit of this little square-nosed Dutchman. But as they overhauled it, a languid interest and finally a keen surprise took the place of their complaining, for on the doomed vessel no preparations for flight or fight were being made. Indeed, there was no sign of alarm, and the crew of the brig were apparently oblivious to the existence of aught but themselves. Through a glass could be seen the captain

* Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

sitting on the deck, reading a big tome. Along the bulwarks leaned a score of men, gazing at the coast. Not a glass, not an eye, even, was turned on the pursuing *Senegambian Queen.*

"Wake them up, quartermaster," said Captain William Avery. "Send a shot through their rigging and let them show that they are alive, or know that we are."

The long twelve spoke, the shot passed harmlessly through the rigging of the brig, and then, like puppets in a show, the men leaning on the bulwarks turned about, the captain closed his book, and all gazed at the pirate ship, calmly and in no alarm.

"Well, the shot half awakened them," said Captain William Avery. "We will see if we cannot drive all the drowsiness from their eyes by boarding them. Ready for boarders!"

As if to aid the design of the captain, came a sudden freshening of the breeze, carrying the *Senegambian Queen* almost to the stranger before it shook the latter's sails at all. And then the eyes of the pirates fell upon what deprived them of speech, and the misgivings that invaded their minds would have made them turn tail and away, but that they were deprived of the power of motion, too. From the open mouth of Captain William Avery came naught but a gasp, the helmsman stood frozen at the wheel, and like statues stood the boarders with their gleaming cutlasses and pikes, while swiftly closed the distance between the well-groomed *Senegambian Queen* and the decaying hulk, along which ran phosphorescent gleams down near the water in the shadow that the two vessels made. On weather-blackened masts hung yellow, tattered, mildewed sails, and over the crumbling bulwarks looked a crew of ancient, hoar men, clad in ragged, faded garments of a past century. It was not the crew of the *Senegambian Queen* that sprang to lash the two vessels together as they touched, but the graybeard crew of the stranger, whose agility and strength belied their age-worn appearance.

"The *Flying Dutchman!* Cut the lashings! Port the helm!" cried Captain William Avery, finding his voice at last, and at last spun the wheel in the helmsman's hands, and a dozen men sprang to do their commander's bidding, but leaped back in dread as a venerable old man appeared, drawing himself over the bulwarks and dropped upon the deck of the *Senegambian Queen.*

"Who is it that thus rudely lies aboard of the ship of Vanderdecken?" he cried in a quavering, yet deep and powerful voice. Not an answer had he save in the clanging of arms dropped by the pirates nearest him as they scurried back into the ranks of their comrades. "But whatever your errand, I am ready to forgive the first men who have not fled from us in a century. Pirates you may be, but you are also men, and the first we have seen face to face in an hundred years. Like lords shall you be treated. Come aboard of us. Malvoisie, Chianti, sherry and the juices of the Rhine, mellowed by the flight of time until there is nowhere its like in this terrestrial globe, shall be yours. Not even kings can drink such wine as you shall have with us. Come, we bear you no ill-will, but love you like brothers, so pleasant it is to see the faces and hear the voices of men once more. Afar off in storms, afar off in fair weather, but always fleeing from our accursed ship, have we seen other ships, so unreal that we have wondered if time had not slain all mankind and we alone be left in the world in the midst of flitting spectres. Blessed be your dishonesty, your temerity, whatever has made you board us to-day. Pursue a ship we cannot, so slow are we. You are the first who have pursued us. Come, the good cheer waits."

The pirates stood astonished for a time, silent and amazed, but at length Captain William Avery raised his voice and said: "These men be preserved beyond their natural span by a curse, and nothing that is of this world has ever harmed them, but I do not believe that they are by reason of this curse more enabled to injure other men than before. They are weak old men. I fear them not. Let us cheer their cold hearts by accepting their hospitality, doing one good deed in our lives. Moreover, the marvels they can tell us will indeed be strange and pleasant to hear."

The breeze lay dead on the water, the sun shone out of a cloudless sky and need of a watch on the *Senegambian Queen* there was none, and all of her crew save Sanchez at the wheel and Scipio and Libya, the two blacks, swarmed on to the vessel of Vanderdecken. That so old a ship should keep the seas caused them much astonishment, yet her frame seemed stout and sound withal, despite the gnawings of worms and time that were evident in the

outer sheathings of her hull and decks. And her company, too, had in like manner been used by the years that had rolled over them. White were their hair and beards, ragged their garments, yet ruddy were their cheeks, bright their eyes, firm their step, straight their backs, and sonorous their voices. Indeed, Captain William Avery remarked upon these incongruities to Mynheer Vanderdecken, who eyed him narrowly, coughed once or twice and ordered that the wine be brought. Sorely were the pirates disappointed in the wine. Good it was and that was all. The flavor that the years had imparted to it was to be told in a slight suspicion of mawkishness, yet this was not what the rovers had found in other old wines, nor did they think it pleasant. Yet they quaffed it copiously, for after all it was wine, and as their spirits rose, they glanced at the silver flagons in the cabin and began to whisper among themselves that it would be but an act of charity to knock the Dutchmen on the head and send them out of the world of which they must be so weary, and, in default of any who could prove kinship, become their heirs. Such thoughts, ere long, Captain William Avery put into jocose words and addressed to Mynheer Vanderdecken, who for a moment grew grave, and then jolly, and cried:

"Done! But have one more cup of wine to our release," and telling all of his men what Captain Avery had proposed, he ordered that the very oldest cask of wine be broached. The rovers gaily drained their beakers, though the sweet mawkishness was more than ever to be tasted in this, the oldest wine.

"Again," shouted Mynheer Vanderdecken, and some of the pirates held forth their beakers, but others lolled against the masts and bulwarks, or fell dozing to the deck.

"Let the stroke fall," said Vanderdecken, but no stroke fell, only the last of the pirates, down to the deck among his prone comrades, sleeping heavily all, snoring and snorting, hard at it, as if striving to compress the slumbers of a week into a few hours' space.

"Van Steenwyck, do you shoot down the Spaniard at the wheel," whispered the Dutch captain. "Marnitz and Wynkoop, level your blunderbusses at the heads of the blacks, and bid them throw up their hands. We will spare them. As for these swine on the

deck, tie weights to their feet and roll them into the sea before they begin to arouse."

Into the quiet depths, one after another shot the crew of the *Senegambian Queen*, and when the last one had sunk beneath the glassy rollers, off came white beards and wigs and ragged coats and the Dutch crew piled aboard the pirate ship and took stock of the great treasure that was now theirs.

"Mynheer Van Oosterzee," said the Dutch captain, addressing a richly dressed man who had not been visible while the pirates were on the brig, "the two years for which I engaged with you are up. Play acting on the seas is more profitable than in Amsterdam, but I yearn for the boards once more. The promise I made you that this slow brig, under my direction, should bring more fortune than the swiftest keel ever laid in England or France, has been made good. The ragged sails and worm-eaten sheathing of the hull have brought more prey to us than ever this sea greyhound, with all of its top-hamper and its clean lines, overtook in like time. These white beards were more protection than coats of mail, superstition kept all cannon shot from our sides, and the wine with mandragora made easy the slaying of those who found it in their hearts to slay others. We have cleared the Indian Ocean of its last pirate. The robbers of England and France, with their jibes at the slow-going Dutch, have been overcome. Now for home."

In the Temple at Singan.*

BY DAVID BRUCE FITZGERALD.

MY wife's recurrent attacks of home-sickness for our farm in Delaware, which time failed to alleviate, determined me to resign my consulate at Singan. We had been there ten years, but the horrible sights and loathsome smells of that swarming Chinese city were as repulsive as on the day we first entered its gates.

"It has been an experience I would not have missed for worlds," Mrs. Carhart was accustomed to say, "but I have had enough of it; and the one longing of my life now is to sit on our east porch at home and watch the steamers going up and down the river."

Though I did not confess it in so many words, the picture my wife drew was one which did not lack attractive features. The happiest day in my life was that on which, with my commission as consul to Signan in my pocket, I took the afternoon express north from Washington. The second happiest day was that on which, ten years later, my successor presented his credentials and took possession of the consular agency in Teng Street. Mrs. Carhart and I, in view of the many ghastly and fantastic scenes which passed before us, had long agreed that curiosity concerning things Chinese was dead in our souls; but now, when our responsibilities were transferred and our trunks packed, it suddenly revived. Mr. Lan Fu succeeded in accomplishing what we would have declared impossible. His suggestion was that we had never seen the festivities attending the great Festival of Buddha, which occurred but once in five years. This was true enough. We had a very vivid recollection of having, on a previous occasion, heard the indescribable noise of this religious observance; but, owing to the fact that we were both ill with malarial fever at the time, we had not been spectators of the processions.

* Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Mr. Lan Fu was the one bright point in my official career at Singan. Of an intelligence vastly superior to the average of his race, he had spent several years in the United States, and possessed those manners which, in every country, mark the man of birth and breeding. My friendship with him, which began soon after our arrival, had been uninterrupted; and though I had never been able to break through that barrier of reserve behind which every Chinaman shelters the mysterious processes of his thinking, I still felt that Lan Fu was a tolerably intimate acquaintance. A hundred times I had appealed to his grave wisdom for the solution of problems which arose in my relations with his countrymen; and his advice, based upon an extensive knowledge of Celestial peculiarities, was invariably tactful and to the point. Lan Fu's official position — that of secretary to his brother, the governor of Shen-si province, with residence at Singan — was also of great service to me, as on more than one occasion I received hints which were invaluable in enabling me to avoid prospective difficulties. When the arrival of my successor dispossessed us of the consular barracks, Mr. Lan Fu placed an apartment in his house at our disposal until we should be quite ready to depart; and he spoke as a host to guests when he urged us to remain over another week in order to view the Festival under his auspices. When he pointed out the fact that it would be possible for us to do this and still catch the steamer at Shanghai, we decided to avail ourselves of his hospitality. The great, five-yearly Festival of Buddha, with its barbaric clamor, its predominance of yellow, its sombre, undecorated processions, its blaze of lanterns and its maze of faces which, even to our accustomed eyes, seemed strangely alike, has little or nothing to do with this story, for the incidents of it occurred before this tremendous Celestial jamboree was well under way and they bear to it a merely casual relation.

It was on the morning of Thursday that, by special permission of the governor, accompanied by an intimation that it would be well to go in native costume, we were carried in closed palanquins to the great temple in the centre of the city, which was a sort of religious headquarters for the province of Shen-si. We arrived considerably in advance of the governor, who, as Mr. Lan Fu rightly conjectured, had been unexpectedly detained.

"It will be impossible for us," said our Chinese friend, "to enter the great temple before my brother comes; but," he continued, pointing across the outer court in which the bearers had deposited us, "there is an apartment yonder which it will be permissible for us to inspect and which contains a curiosity associated with your own country. Possibly you may recognize it.

"I have never told you the mission which took me to the United States," he continued, as we traversed the courtyard toward a doorway in the wall at its north end.

"No; I have always supposed that you went for the purpose of studying the institutions of our country."

"That and something else," replied the Chinaman, smiling. "There has never been any particular reason why I should not tell you the story, except that innate aversion which I have in common with all my countrymen to allowing foreigners to participate in knowledge of our religious and political affairs. I do not know that I should even now relate the story were it not that you are about to depart and that it may interest you to learn the solution of what many people in your country must regard as a mystery."

"This is too interesting for anything, Mr. Lan Fu," remarked my wife, quickening her pace; and I will admit that my own curiosity was stimulated by the words of our Chinese friend, for Lan Fu was not one of those Celestials who are always preparing sensational episodes for the benefit of foreigners.

We passed through the doorway at the end of the courtyard into another walled enclosure, small, square and flanked on one side by the façade of a low building, which we entered. The priest who stood at the door seemed to regard our going in as a matter of course and made no attempt to follow us. The interior hall was not more than twenty feet square, and was lighted by three narrow windows on each side. It was completely unfurnished except for some statues in niches, which we at once recognized as those of minor deities. A slight, solitary pedestal, some five feet in height, rose in the centre of the room. A white silk cushion, elaborately embroidered with golden lilies, lay on its broad top, and on this cushion was placed the object to which Lan Fu directed our attention. It was a small and exquisitely colored vase, about eighteen inches in height. Its top was yellow, shading

through rose-pink to a red body; and Mrs. Carhart, who knew something of porcelain, became at once interested and enthusiastic. As for myself, I gazed blankly at the vase for a few moments and then turned enquiringly to our friend.

"You have no doubt heard of the celebrated Peachblow Vase," he said, in reply to my questioning look.

"Undoubtedly!" I cried. "Its disappearance was at one time the journalistic sensation of America; and, as I was then the editor of a newspaper in Wilmington, I heard much about it."

"Perhaps you can tell me something," said Mr. Lan Fu, "of the theories which were current. I left the United States just at the time when the mysterious withdrawal of the vase from public notice was beginning to attract attention and excite comment."

"I fear the details have escaped me," I replied; "but, to the best of my recollection, the vase was brought to America by a well-known art connoisseur, who placed it on exhibition in his private gallery, where it attracted much attention on account of the inimitable delicacy of its glaze. At his death it was offered at auction in New York City and was purchased for eighteen thousand dollars in cash by a gentleman who informed the reporters present that he was merely acting as the agent of a famous Baltimore collector. Then, taking the vase with him, he left the auction room; and, so far as I am aware, from that moment to this no American has ever seen that costly bit of porcelain. The gentleman in Baltimore whose name was connected with the sale strenuously denied that he was the purchaser, and the vase was never seen in his collection. Several metropolitan newspapers afterward expended considerable effort and money in the attempt to solve the problem of its ownership, but all investigation was fruitless."

"Tell us about it, Mr. Lan Fu," said my wife, turning momentarily from her inspection of the curiosity.

"About sixteen years ago," said our Chinese friend, "my brother and I were sent to this province, he as governor and I, then just fresh from my official examinations, as his secretary. The country was in a state of unrest, and we had not long enjoyed our positions here before a revolt broke out and soon attained formidable proportions. It was rumored that a large body of rebels, under the leadership of a religious fanatic, was advancing upon Singan

from the north, and this information suggested to us the advisability of concealing our valuables. This vase was brought from the temple, on account of the apprehension in the minds of the priests that it would be the first point of attack, and was placed on a shelf in the governor's private office, where it would be immediately under his eye or my own. The insurrection was suppressed before flight became necessary; but, in the excitement attendant upon mustering the forces at our command, the vase disappeared. Its absence was noticed almost immediately, but the turbulence of the city was such that the trusted household servant who had taken it was never apprehended.

"You will no doubt be surprised when I tell you that the loss of that vase was disastrous to the political fortunes of my brother and myself. Its disappearance, though carefully concealed from the populace, was reported to the government at Pekin, and, though we lost our positions, the Emperor was considerate enough to say that we should be restored in case the vase were found and returned previous to the next great Festival of Buddha, until which time popular clamor was not likely to break out. This placed nearly four years at our disposal, and our family did not lack private means to prosecute an investigation. We inaugurated then a careful and systematic search, covering first the province and then the empire. For some time our efforts were unavailing, but finally an agent in Eastern China reported that a vase answering to the description of that for which we were in search had been sold to a dealer in curios and taken to America. I was immediately commissioned at a family council to proceed to the United States and institute enquiries.

"I will not weary you with a narration of the difficulties I encountered. Being unfamiliar with the English language, and not daring to confide my mission to a second person, I found it impossible even to locate the object of my search. Indeed, I spent a whole year in San Francisco before I discovered that the bit of porcelain was probably on the other side of the Continent. However, as my facility in the use of the language increased, my task became proportionately easier, and on reaching New York my linguistic attainments were so far advanced that I was able to master the sense of the articles in the daily newspapers. With this

advantage I was not long in discovering that a celebrated art collection in that city contained a vase which probably, from the description, was the one I sought.

"My unwillingness to confide in the Chinese officials residing in the United States was based upon the fact that I anticipated an unfriendly attitude on their part; and I was aware, too, that with the facilities at their disposal they might easily supersede me in the attempt to recover the vase, which would have meant their advancement and the continuance of my family in disgrace. I went, however, to the Chinese minister at Washington, and representing that I was in the country for the purpose of studying its institutions, and telling him that I wished to visit the large art collections of the United States, secured cards of introduction to the owners of several private galleries, including the particular one I had in mind. A visit and personal inspection enabled me to verify my conjecture that it was the veritable vase which had been stolen from my brother's palace in this city; and, a point equally important to me, I was allowed to examine it with a minuteness which was sufficient to assure me that it was intact. My offer to purchase it was politely declined. I know now that the figure I named was much less than that paid by the possessor at the time; but, knowing the actual value of the article, I feared to offer more lest my anxiety should arouse suspicion.

"In the course of the next year and a half I devised many expedients for securing possession of the baffling bit of porcelain, but none of them were successful. I would even confess that several plots for stealing it — which in this case would have been nothing more than re-taking something to which I had a right — were frustrated by my timidity and unwillingness to confide in the agents whom I employed. But at length fortune favored me. I learned that, consequent upon the death of the American owner of the vase, it would be sold at auction, together with the whole collection of which it formed a part. Many names were mentioned as those of possible purchasers, but I felt sure that, with the resources at my disposal, it would come into my possession. My preparations were carefully made. Not wishing to appear in person at the sale, lest my determination to buy the article should arouse opposition and thwart me at the last moment, I engaged an

American representative, whose allegiance to my cause was confirmed by solemn promises and by the fact that he was to receive five thousand dollars for his services. His instructions were to purchase the vase at the lowest possible price, but to secure it at any figure not exceeding two hundred thousand dollars, which was the amount I held in reserve for an emergency. It was "knocked down," as they say in your country, to my agent for eighteen thousand dollars in cash. A few hours later I left New York, bound, by way of San Francisco, for Shanghai."

Once or twice during the progress of this narration my wife glanced at me with an expression which plainly suggested incredulity, especially when Lan Fu mentioned the amount he stood ready to pay for the vase. "Surely," Mrs. Carhart remarked, when he had finished, "though that vase is extraordinary in its way, I should never have dreamed that it was worth anywhere near two hundred thousand dollars."

"Nor is it," replied the Chinaman, lifting the vase from the cushion and handling it with a carelessness which aroused my keenest apprehensions for its safety. "It could probably be duplicated for what would be the equivalent of a thousand dollars of the money of your country. It is undoubtedly a beautiful specimen of the potter's art, but by no means unique in the Celestial Kingdom. You will understand my willingness to purchase it at the figure I named only when I call attention to the fact that there is a hole in the bottom which was not there when I bought it."

"How interesting!" exclaimed my wife; though I do not believe that she, any more than I, interpreted the drift of our friend's remarks.

"You will observe," continued Lan Fu, presenting the article for our closer inspection, "that the base of this vase is very thick — quite two inches. Owing to the narrowness of the mouth this fact is not noticeable and would probably be discovered only by one who should take pains to measure it inside and out. The hole in the bottom of the vase is about an inch in diameter and perhaps an inch and three quarters deep. A small object placed in this hole and carefully covered with a hard cement would, if the operation were skilfully done, be quite likely to escape the notice of any one unaware of its existence."

"Ah! I see," I said. "There was a valuable — a large diamond or something of that sort — concealed in the bottom."

"You are right in supposing that there was something concealed there," replied the Chinaman, replacing the vase on its embroidered cushion, "but it was not a jewel. Come, and I will give you a sight of what cost me a couple of anxious years. My brother will be arriving by this time and we will view the interior of the great temple."

We found the governor and his retinue alighting from their palanquins in the courtyard, and after exchanging the customary salutation, we ascended the steps toward the door of the temple, which swung open at our approach. A company of priests, gorgeously clad, welcomed us in the vestibule and conducted us into the splendid hall, which was dedicated to the worship of the god who divides with Confucius the reverence and devotion of the great empire. The ornamentation of the interior, if not beautiful to Western eyes, was rich beyond all possibility of estimate. It seemed to me that the glitter of burnished gold and the flash of jewels were everywhere. At one end of the hall there was a gigantic sitting figure of Buddha, executed in bronze and silver. Before it stood a large square table of ebony, inlaid with pearl and precious stones, and supported by four dragons. On this table, rising out of a half globe of iridescent glass, was a solitary lotus flower. Reposing in the heart of the flower was a yellow piece of bone about an inch in length. It was dark streaked and rusty and might have been a broken piece of shark's tooth or the dental remnant of a horse. The company salaamed profoundly at sight of this aged relic, and a few prostrated themselves.

"The Sacred Tooth of Buddha is ready for exhibition to his devout followers," said the governor, breaking the silence and addressing himself to the priests.

"It is ready," replied a voice.

"Then, an hour hence, you will cause the gates to be opened, that all who will may come and behold, and receive the blessing."

Lan Fu's eyes glanced first at the relic and then his gaze met mine. Mrs. Carhart intercepted the look, and we both understood. That ugly piece of yellow bone was worth more than all the crown jewels of China.